



# FORTY-THREE

OXFORD FRIENDS' MEETING  
43 ST.GILES OXFORD OX1 3LW

## NEWSLETTER

Number 395

FEBRUARY 2012

40 pence

### How shall we make our contribution to sustainability?

On 6 January, nearly 50 people from Oxford and Headington Meetings came together for a 'Friday with Friends' gathering. The aim was to take forward Yearly Meeting's strong commitment for Quakers, nationally, to become a sustainable, low-carbon community. There was a very high level of energy and 'buzz' at Friday with Friends, and a strong corporate determination to 'get practical' both individually and as a whole community.

Toward the end of the evening, people were invited to propose or offer actions that they intend to make, towards sustainability, in 2012. The result was the truly inspiring list of Actions that will be circulated. The actions included supporting each other to take individual action via 'friendly eights' – informal groups of eight Friends who agree to meet together eight times – to enjoy one another's company, to discuss, to plan, perhaps to eat together, to read something or watch a video together and overall to support and get to know each other better; ideally, we hope that *everyone* associated with Oxford or Headington Meetings will join one or more sustainability friendly eights. Others committed themselves to personal New Year resolutions, to campaigning and political action, to sharing resources and helping each other, and to more systematic monitoring of our carbon footprints. For example, so far, more than a

dozen people hope to take part in the 'Green Deal' for a free home-energy audit, on offer by Low Carbon Oxford North (LCON). Others have signed up for 'carbon conversations' (another great programme run by LCON and other local groups). We hope that wherever possible other commitments can be linked into existing groups, such as the 'global change & economic justice' group, and/or into further 'friendly eights'.

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

### From Quaker Faith and Practice

For a Quaker, religion is not an external activity, concerning a special 'holy' part of the self. It is an openness to the world in the here and now with the whole of the self. If this is not simply a pious commonplace, it must take into account the whole of our humanity: our attitudes to other human beings in our most intimate as well as social and political relationships. It must also take account of our life in the world around us, the way we live, the way we treat animals and the environment. In short, to put it in traditional language, there is no part of ourselves and of our relationships where God is not present.

**QF&P 20.20 Harvey Gillman, 1988**

*Thank you to Luke Stamper for choosing and reading this from the copy of QF&P presented to him last October at our All-Age Worship.*

**Deadline for contributions to the March 2012 issue: noon, Friday 17 February**

*Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, would be appreciated to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org), and items for the calendar on page 6 can be emailed to [lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com](mailto:lukesamuelmartin@gmail.com). Paper copy can be left in one of the editors' pigeonholes at the Meeting House. For information: tel. 01865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)*

*Continued from page 1, column 2*

We were delighted at how strongly and quickly people have responded – and continue to respond – to the call. This is going to be a wonderful means of deepening and re-energizing our spiritual and practical community! Please tell us if you would like to join any of these new groups or share your own commitments with others in the Meeting, or if you have new ideas and proposals.

### *Climate Impact Calculators*

Britain Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, and our recent Fridays with Friends on Sustainability held in Oxford Meeting in December and January, ask that *all Friends and Attenders* complete a Climate Impact Calculator. This is to establish a baseline calculation of our personal carbon usage – as a whole Meeting – so that we can measure our progress against it in the future.

There should be sufficient copies on the table in the Meeting House (at Sunday Meetings for Worship), or in the front lobby of FMH, for everyone to take one away to complete. Please fill it in, and then tell us your final grand total: that is, your overall climate footprint, in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Put this figure on a slip of paper and deposit it in the box by the front door in the lobby of FMH. Please also put your name in the box, so we know who has completed the task. Keep your own copy of the calculator leaflet in a safe place, so that you can find it again next year!

The form can also be completed online at the Friends House website: [www.quaker.org.uk/extras/climateimpact/index.html](http://www.quaker.org.uk/extras/climateimpact/index.html) which helps by doing the sums for you. But please *also* give your results to us in the box as above.

With many thanks from your F/friendly sustainability co-ordinating group,

**Alan Allport** ([alan.allport@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alan.allport@psy.ox.ac.uk)),  
**Jill Green** ([quakers@greenfig.org.uk](mailto:quakers@greenfig.org.uk)), and  
**Sue Smith** ([wishingchair@btinternet.com](mailto:wishingchair@btinternet.com))



Following on from Ron Hillier’s response to Keith’s conundrum (see last month’s issue) I thought Friends might be interested to know a little bit more about the interpretation of the Mosaic laws.

The 613 commandments (the Mosaic laws) are composed of the statements and principles of law, ethics, and spiritual practice contained in the Torah, which is the name given by Jews to the first five books of the bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

In rabbinic literature the word Torah denotes both these five books and an oral tradition. The oral portion consists of the traditional interpretations and amplifications handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and these are now embodied in the Talmud and Midrash. According to Jewish tradition the entire Torah, both written and oral, was revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai.

The simplest example is the ‘eye for an eye’ principle. The Torah laws defined and *restricted* the extent of retribution. The rule was that punishment must be exactly equal to the crime, i.e. compensation was *restricted* to the monetary value of the loss. At the root of this principle is that one of the purposes of the law is to provide equitable retribution for an offended party. Thus, it might be better read: ‘*only* one eye for one eye’.

Another example of the interpretation of the written laws concerns capital punishment. Before it could be carried out certain conditions had to be fulfilled, e.g.: there had to be ‘malice aforethought’ — the potential perpetrator had to be warned that what they were about to do was criminal and would be punished; the person had to acknowledge the warning — it had to be clear that the person was fully aware they were about to commit a capital crime; a minimum of two witnesses had to be present at the scene of the crime.

The Sanhedrins, or rabbinical courts, were an assembly of 23 judges appointed in every city in the Biblical Land of Israel. They were monitored to ensure that they didn’t carry out too many executions. If there was more than one in 70 years the court was considered a ‘bloody court’, i.e. brutal!

So although it might appear that the laws were very harsh, in practice this was not the case.

## Introducing Members and Attenders of Oxford Meeting



**Katherine North,**  
talking to Tanya Garland

This is my third year in Oxford doing a degree in Maths and Philosophy at New College – a fourth year gives me a Masters. I was brought up in Macclesfield, Cheshire where my Dad was a maths teacher and Mum was an accountant before having me and my brother. Mum is a Christian and Dad is a Quaker and I have shopped between the two throughout my life. I still go to both in Oxford – attending Young Friends Meeting on Thursday nights and church on Sundays at St Columbus in Alfred Street. I receive the teaching at church and the spiritual side in the silence of Meeting. I am definitely a Christian, and I don't think Meeting would mean much to me without that. I have heard that others in the society are Buddhist or atheist and that one can take what one likes from Meeting, but I think that Quakers then are in danger of using it as some place where people can come and feel spiritual but are not really communicating with God or doing anything that is the point of the Meeting. I could have been one of those people myself if I hadn't had teaching from somewhere else.

Throughout my teenage years I went on Quaker camps. There was something very powerful being with 200 young people of my own age, sitting in silence, listening to God and receiving the Spirit. Not all were Quakers, some were from churches, but we all got swept up in the atmosphere at JYM. I also made close friends through a Christian internet forum when I was fourteen. The people I met online were all Christians and we shared prayer requests and prayed for each other. I am still in touch with some of them online, even though we have never met. This was definitely a formative experience for me in terms of my spiritual life. There was a moment when I was about ten, when I was reading the bible and I realised I was loved and forgiven and that Jesus died for me. My faith has gone up and down a lot since, but that experience goes somewhere towards answering why I am a Christian.

At school I sang in the choir and played the violin to grade eight, and now, in term time, I lead the

singing of hymns and other worship songs for the Oxford Inter-collegiate Christian Union's worship band, sometimes before 200 people. I would never have thought I could do this before. When I have the time, I play the violin in my college orchestra and I've also ended up as college chapel warden. I serve in chapel fairly often in cassock, carrying a candle and sometimes administering the wine.

On a different note, I went through the Girl Guides organisation from Rainbows (five- to six-year-olds), Brownies (up to ten) and then Guides. I enjoy working with young people so I went straight into being a Young Leader for the organisation and at the moment I'm with Rainbows leading a programme called 'Looking, Learning, Laughing and Loving'. A bit cheesy! It was with a group of Guides that I took part in a hundred-mile walk around the Isle of Man. It was harder than I had ever expected, and so finishing that walk in eight days was amazing. I felt I had achieved something off my own bat and I received £500 from sponsorship for Water Aid.

I chose Maths and Philosophy for a degree partly because I am indecisive so decided to take both. I get stuck building maths up from its foundations, having to prove what one took for granted at school, and examining what constitutes a proof. I've always loved thinking about other views – what counts as valid reasoning, what backs up an argument etc. and I love writing. I find it helpful verbalising one's thoughts. It is easier to communicate with oneself; to understand, to be more clearly aware of, and sort out, what one is thinking and feeling (especially if I'm stressed or worried about things). Last year, working through a Philosophy module in Aesthetics I was shown how you could apply philosophical and moral concerns to anything – even to whether something looks nice or not: whether it is opinion or whether there is a standard of beauty, or whether something is beautiful if a lot of people think it is beautiful. To some extent, the philosophy of maths, which is an absolute like the numbers, like beauty and justice, exists independently whether or not it is substantiated. That thinking too relates to thinking about God, I think. God created all these numbers and properties and things in the same way as creating the world... and because he created them within finite laws, we can use them, understand them and understand something of God. Yes – definitely.

## Friendly Bible Study

Would you like to reflect on Bible passages, in the light of your own life and experiences, together with other Quakers? Friendly Bible Study is a way of doing this, developed by liberal American Friends. Everyone is equal in the study process, with no leader or central authority figure. It focuses on relating the Bible to our individual personal experience and daily lives, and recognises that this may lead to the same passage speaking differently to different people. A group of us were meeting regularly to use this method of Bible exploration over the summer and autumn of last year. We're restarting and would welcome new faces to the group.

At each meeting, we consider a short passage, starting by several people reading the passage aloud, in different translations. We then have a period of around 20 minutes of silence, during which time each Friend considers and writes down responses to the following questions: what is the author's main point in this passage? What new light do I find in this particular reading of this passage of the text? Is this passage true to my experience? What are the implications of this passage for my life? What problems do I have with this passage? We then read aloud our personal responses to each question, with brief periods of silence between each contribution. Each member of the group therefore has an equal voice, with everybody's contribution valued equally.

The focus on relating the passages to my own experience and my life has enabled me to develop spiritually and personally, in ways I probably would not have done simply by reading the passages alone. I have also really valued hearing the light drawn by others from their reading of the same text. There have been some passages for which I had initially thought there could only be one meaning, but I have been fascinated to discover different meanings which were brought by other Friends, reflecting in part the different places we have reached in our individual journeys. The deep personal sharing of our spiritual and personal experience within these meetings has enabled me to get to know other members of the group better.

If you think this approach to exploring the Bible might be for you, we would be very happy to welcome you to the group. We meet in the short room from 11 am - 12 pm every Sunday, and are

currently working our way through Mark's gospel. If you'd like to join us but the timing isn't good for you, please let one of us know.

For more information about the Friendly Bible Study method, see:  
[www.read-the-bible.org/FriendlyBibleStudy.htm](http://www.read-the-bible.org/FriendlyBibleStudy.htm)

**Matthew Gee**



Did you know that our FMH is officially a Fair-trade Church? This means that we have committed ourselves to using products wherever possible and to raising awareness about Fairtrade, which ensures that the people who produce the food and clothes that we consume are paid a decent wage for them and have good living conditions.

We have a wonderful opportunity to renew our commitment during Fairtrade Fortnight 2012 from Monday 27 February to Sunday 11 March. This year, the Fairtrade Foundation is urging everyone to "Take a Step for Fairtrade – It can be a simple step like swapping your tea to Fairtrade, or a bigger step, like asking everyone in your office to do it too." For more information, visit [www.step.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.step.fairtrade.org.uk)

What steps can we take at FMH? Most of us know that you can buy fairly traded tea, coffee, chocolates and bananas, but there is a huge range of other Fairtrade products we could be using. Let's challenge ourselves at the Bring and Share lunch on Sunday 26 February to use as many Fairtrade ingredients in our dishes as possible. Here are some ideas you could use: rice and pasta, dried fruit, herbs and spices\*, honey, jams and spreads, molasses, nuts and nut oil, olives and olive oil, pulses, quinoa, sugar, syrup, vegetables, yoghurt and ice cream.

You can buy these at a range of shops in Oxford, including your local Co-op store and dedicated Fairtrade shops such as in St Michael's in the Northgate and the Windmill in Headington. The Oxford Fairtrade Coalition provides a list of outlets on their website: [www.oxfairtrade.org.uk](http://www.oxfairtrade.org.uk)

For more information about Fairtrade in Oxford – including other Fairtrade Fortnight activities – visit The Oxford Fairtrade Coalition website: [www.oxfairtrade.org.uk](http://www.oxfairtrade.org.uk) For broader information, please see the Fairtrade Foundation website: [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk). If you have any questions or suggestions, please do come and chat to your Fairtrade representatives, Sabita Banerji ([banerji.sabita@gmail.com](mailto:banerji.sabita@gmail.com), 07773 949 787) and Patricia Wright ([pwtreasure@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pwtreasure@yahoo.co.uk)).

**Sabita Banerji** (Illustration by **Sue Mynall**)

\*Just Change now has a range of spices to offer, as well as tea. These are available from Sabita at FMH most Sundays.

---

### ***Less is More***

Can less be more, can more be less?  
Well, yes and no, and no and yes  
Well, more or less...

More bikes, fewer cars  
Less haze, more stars

Less haste, more time  
Less reason, more rhyme

More time, less stress  
Fewer miles, more fresh (vegetables)

Fewer car parks, more acres of available urban soil  
More farmers' markets, less produce effectively  
marinated in crude oil

Less colouring, more taste  
More mashing, less waste

Fewer couch potatoes, more spring greens  
Fewer tired tomatoes, more runner beans

More stillness, less inertia  
Less illness, more Echinacea

More community, less isolation  
Less just sitting there, *more participation!*

More wells (not oil ones, obviously), fewer ills  
Fewer clean fingernails, more skills

More co-operation, less compliancy  
Less complacency, more self-reliance

Less competition, more collaboration  
Less passive listening, *more participation!*

Less attention defic..., more concentration  
Less passive listening, *more participation!*

(Less repetition)

Less of a warm globe, more a chilly'un  
More of a wise world, at least 34 fewer parts of CO<sub>2</sub>  
per million

Less stress-related cardio-vascular and  
pulmonary failure  
More nurturing quality time in the company of a  
favourite clematis or dahlia

More craftsmanship, less built-in obsolescence  
More political maturity, less apparently-consequence  
-free extended adolescence

More believed-to-be-beautiful, known-to-be-useful  
*things*  
Less cheap, pointless, petroleum-steeped *stuff*

So Yes, less *is* more – and enough's enough...

**Matt Harvey**

Selected by the Friends Fellowship of Healing

## ***Friday with Friends***

***Friday 24 February***  
***'Dogma and the Deficit'***

*Led by Tony Atkinson,*  
*Economist & Attender*

In the Garden Room at FMH  
The session will start at 7 for 7:30  
and will finish by 9:30 pm

### **Young Friends General Meeting**

Nottingham, 17 - 19 February  
**FREE**, including travel, for all newcomers  
For details: <http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk>

## CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2012

*All 43 St Giles unless otherwise indicated*

Thursday 2	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Thursday 16	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Sunday 5	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Saturday 18	11 am—3 pm	Extended Meeting
Sunday 5	12:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Business	Sunday 19	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
Thursday 9	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults	Thursday 23	7:30 pm	Meeting for Worship for Young Adults
Sunday 12	11 am	Friendly Bible Study	Friday 24	7 pm for 7:30pm	Friday With Friends
Wednesday 15	1:45 pm	Friends Fellowship of Healing	Sunday 26	11 am	Friendly Bible Study
			Sunday 26	12:30 pm	Bring-and-share lunch

### Reading of Shelley's dramatic poem of nonviolent resistance

On 26 February at 2:30 pm, Oxford Chamber Theatre will present a rehearsed reading by nine professional actors of Shelley's dramatic poem *Prometheus Unbound* in St. Peter's Church, First Turn, Upper Wolvercote, Oxford, OX2 8AQ (note the change of venue). David Jones will perform his own newly composed music on organ and with voice.

Shelley wrote *Prometheus Unbound* in 1818-19. According to his wife, Mary (née Godwin), 'Shelley believed that . . . man could be so perfectionised as to be able to expel evil from his own nature'. Writing (and of course reading and hearing) poetry is certainly a means of 'perfectionising' mankind.

*Prometheus Unbound* is one of several Shelley poems depicting or advocating nonviolent resistance which were an influence on Gandhi in carrying out his own programme of nonviolent opposition to tyrannical power, something Friends have supported since their earliest days. Prometheus calls back his curse on his enemy, Jupiter – a response which those closest to him at first interpret as shameful surrender.

Tickets are £8/£6, available from [www.wegotickets.com](http://www.wegotickets.com) or on the door.

**Arthur Kincaid**

#### MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

**Sundays** at 9:30 and 11 a.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by coffee and tea)

**Wednesdays** at 12:15 p.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by coffee and tea)

**Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** at 7:30 a.m. at 43 St Giles  
(followed by breakfast at 8 a.m.)

**Sundays** at 10 a.m. at The Priory,  
85 Old High St, Headington

#### OPENING TIMES (43 ST GILES):

Wednesday - Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

*Forty-Three* is available online, at  
[www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter](http://www.oxfordquakers.org/newsletter)

If you are considering writing an article or notice but would prefer it not to go online, please don't hesitate to contribute it. Just indicate that the piece is not for inclusion in the internet version — no reason will be asked for.

*Editorial Team: MARK EBDEN, PENNY ORMEROD, and BECKY RIDDELL (Joint Editing & Production); TINA LEONARD, DEBORAH FILGATE (Proofreaders); LUKE MARTIN (Distributor and Subscriptions)*